The Morphological Status of Korean Case Markers*

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to determine the theoretical status of case markers in Korean in a highly modularized grammar. Their status has remained controversial for a long time in studies of Korean grammar. In most previous analyses, they were treated as either inflectional suffixes (Kang 1987) or as postpositions (Choy 1985). However, neither approach was convincing.

This indeterminacy cannot be tolerated from the standpoint of a highly modularized grammar, especially when we consider the tasks of the syntatic and the morphological components and their interactions in such a grammar. The two components are regarded as independent of each other in their operations. The morphology describes only the distribution of morphemes within words, that is, how morphemes can be combined into words or word forms. On the other hand, syntax describes the distribution of syntactic constituents only. More importantly, syntax is considered to be blind to the internal morphological structure of words in its operations. The idea behind this restriction is that syntax becomes unconstrained once we allow it to have this power, as pointed out in Zwicky (1987).

Now, it becomes clear why determining the status of case markers in Korean is important, as it affects one's description of Korean syntax and morphology. If the markers are treated as inflectional suffixes, their distribution should be described in morphology by way of morphological rules. On the other hand, if the markers are considered postpositions, their distribution should be described in syntax in terms of syntactic rules such as phrase structure rules or subcategorization frames.

This study will investigate case markers as follows: first, in order to help the reader appreciate the problem, section 2 will compare case markers and postpositions using the criteria for distinguishing bound words (or clitics) and inflectional suffixes which were given in Zwicky and Pullum (1983) and Zwicky (1984). Then the differences between nominative/accusative markers and dative/ablative markers will be discussed. It will be argued that three analyses are compatible with the described facts: (a) the treatment of the nominative/accusative markers as postpositions and the dative/ablative markers as suffixes; (b) the treatment of the nominative/accusative markers as suffixes and the dative/ablative markers as postpositions; and (c) the treatment of all case markers as postpositions. Section 3 will begin with an examination of a Korean plural marker, known as the subject plural marker (the SPM), as well as an argument that the SPM is an inflectional suffix. After examining the interaction between the SPM and case markers, it will be argued that nominative/accusative case markers should be treated as inflectional suffixes and dative/ablative markers as postpositions. In section 4, I will examine how the descriptions of the SPM and the case markers can be implemented in a formal grammar. For this purpose, I will employ Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar, as proposed in Gazdar et al. (1985), and the process-based morphological framework proposed in Zwicky (1985, 1987, 1988). Section 5 will summarize this study.

2. Facts and possible analyses

2.1 Case markers and postpositions

First, a brief introduction to case markers and postpositions is in order. More detailed characteristics will be given later in the discussion.

The case markers under consideration are as follows.[1]

(1) Nominative: -i/-ka
Accusative: -ul/-lul
Dative/ablative: -eykey, -hanthey

-I and -ka in the nominative case and -ul and -lul in the accusative case are phonologically conditioned allomorphs: -i and -ul occur after a consonant-final morpheme and -ka and -lul follow a vowel-final morpheme. The dative/ablative case markers -eykey and -hanthey are in free variation. (2) provides examples.[2]

(2) a. haksayng-i (*-ka) chayk-ul (*-lul) ilk-ess-eyo
student-NOM book-ACC read-PAST-IND
'a student read a book'
b. kangaci-ka (*-i) kkoli-lul (*-ul) huntul-eyo
puppy-NOM tail-ACC wag-IND
'a puppy is wagging his tail'
c. haksayng-i kangaci-eykey/-hanthey meki-lul cu-ess-eyo
student-NOM puppy-DAT food-ACC give-PAST-IND
'a student gave food to a dog'

All of the case markers are bound morphemes which have no semantic content, functioning simply to indicate the case of their host. A host may be an NP, PP, quantifier phrase (including classifier phrase), or nominalized sentence, as shown in (3).[3]

(3) a. NP: [haksaying] -i/-ul/-hanthey (haksayng 'student')
b. PP: [haksayng-man] -i/-ul (-man 'only')[4]
c. QuantifierP: [motuw] -ka/-lul/-hanthey (motu 'all')
d. ClassifierP: [yel mali] -ka/-lul/-hanthey (yel 'ten'; mali Classifier)
e. Nominalized sentences: [pap-ul mek-ki] -ka/-lul[5] (pap 'rice'; mek- 'eat'; -ki Nominalizer)

The occurrence of case markers in sentences is optional in that a marker may be freely dropped when the case of its host can be understood from context.[6] Thus it is common for no case markers to appear in a sentence. For example, the parenthesized case markers in (4) are optional. (5) lists some Korean postpositions.

(4) a. ayki(-ka) pap(-ul) mek-ess-e?
baby-NOM rice-ACC eat-PAST-INT
'did the baby eat rice?'
b. kangaci(-hanthey) pap(-ul) cuw-eyaci.
puppy-DAT food-ACC give-SUG
'you need to give food to the puppy'

(5) a. -man 'only'
b. -ppuwn 'only'
c. -cocha 'even'
d. -puwthe 'from'
e. -kkaci 'to'
f. -khenyeng 'even'
g. -mankhum 'as much (many) as'
h. -chelem 'like'

Postpositions in Korean are also bound morphemes, and the syntactic categories to which they attach are the same as those that precede case markers, i.e., NPs, PPs, quantifier phrases (including classifier phrases), and nominalized sentences, as in (6).

(6) a. NP: [haksayng] -man/-ppuwn/-cocha (haksayng 'student')
b. PP: [haksayng-mankhum] -man/-khenyeng
c. QuantifierP: [ilpu] -man/-ppun/-cocha (ilpu 'part')
d. ClassifierP: [yel mali] -man/-ppun/-kkaci (yel 'ten'; mali Classifier)
e. Nominalized Ss: [pap-ul mek-ki] -cocha/-man/-kkaci (pap 'rice'; mek 'eat'; -ki Nominalizer)

While they certainly show some similarities to case markers, postpostions differ from case markers in that they have the semantic content shown in (5), and also in that they are not optional. Thus, (7a) and (7b) cannot be understood to have the same meaning. (7a) is true only when other students did not read, but (7b) is true even when other students read as well as long as ku haksayng 'the student' read.

(7) a. ku haksayng-man(-i) ilk-ess-eyo
the student-only-NOM read-PAST-IND
'only the student read'
b. ku haksayng(-i) ilk-ess-eyo
the student read

So much for a brief introduction of postpositions and case markers in Korean. What we need in order to decide on the status of case markers is the criteria for distinguishing affixes from bound words (or clitics). It is for this purpose that I will employ the various criteria given in Zwicky & Pullum (1983) and Zwicky (1984). The criteria are of two kinds. The criteria which are not theory-bound are listed in (8) and a criterion which comes from metatheoretic considerations is in (9).

(8) a. Phonologically bound words can undergo external sandhi rules, while affixes undergo internal sandhi rules.
b. Bound words can receive accents, but affixes usually do not.
c. Bound words can be flexible with regard to the order regarding their hosts, but affixes are not.
d. Bound words can exhibit a low degree of selection with respect to their hosts, while affixes exhibit a high degree of selection with respect to their stems.
e. Bound words can attach to material already containing bound words, but affixes cannot.
f. Arbitrary gaps in the set of combinations are more characteristic of affixes than bound words.
g. Morphophonological idiosyncrasies are more characteristic of affixes than of bound words.
h. Semantic idiosyncrasies are more characteristic of affixes than of bound words.

(9) Syntactic rules and operations can refer to bound words, but not affixes.

As Zwicky points out, the criteria in (8) are a collection of the typical characteristics of bound words and affixes and so they are diagnostic criteria, not absolute ones. Indeterminacy may result when an item shows characteristics of both bound words and affixes, or when inflectional affixes and bound words show few differences in a language. In these situations the criterion in (9) may play a crucial role. It derives from metatheoretical considerations about the organization of a highly modularized grammar: syntax and morphology are independent of each other and syntax is blind to the morphological structure of the words on which it operates. If the distribution of an item must be described by reference to its host's morphological structure, then the item should be treated as an affix, not a bound word.

By comparison with the criteria in (8), case markers and postpositions do not seem to be clearly either affixes or bound words. (8a) and (8b) are of no help because it is hard to find appropriate phonological rules to use as tests in Korean, and because Korean does not use accent or stress as a grammatical device. (8c) is not relevant because Korean requires a rigid order between hosts and both affixes and bound words. (8g) and (8h) are also of little help because neither inflectional suffixes nor bound words show any morphological or semantic idiosyncracy. For example, the subject plural marker, which will be proven to be an inflectional suffix in section 3, does not show any morphological or semantic idiosyncracy.

When compared with the criteria in (8d) through (8f), both postpositions and case markers may seem to belong to the same category. They can attach to the same syntactic categories and so show a low degree of selection with regard to their hosts. They can attach to bound words, namely postpositions and classifiers, and they show no arbitrary gaps in their distribution. Thus both appear to be bound words.

However, no argument based on only the three criteria in (8d)-(8f) seems very strong because the characteristics of bound words specified in these criteria can be shown to characterize inflectional affixes also, as pointed out in Zwicky (1987). As mentioned above, it is in this situation that the criterion in (9) can play a crucial role, and the importance of this criterion will be demonstrated in section 3. But first it is necessary for us to take a closer look at the characteristics of case markers because, as we will see, they are not a homogeneous group.

2.2 Nominative/accusative case markers vs. dative case markers

Although previous analyses would treat case markers simply as either suffixes or bound words, the situation is a bit more complicated, as pointed out in Kuh (1985, 1986). Unlike many languages, Korean nominative/accusative markers show several differences from dative/ablative markers.

A. When the host is a PP consisting of an NP and a postposition, nominative/accusative markers can occur only at the end of the postposition, while dative/ablative markers can occur only at the end of the NP--that is, before the postposition. (10) and (11) illustrate these restrictions with a postpostional phrase [[haksayng$_{NP}$-man$_{P}$]$_{PP}$ 'only students'. (haksayng 'student'; -man 'only'; -i nom.; -ul acc.; hanthey dat.)

(10) a. haksayng -man -i/-ul
b. *haksayng -i/-ul -man -i/-ul
c. *haksayng -i/-ul -man

(11) a. haksayng -hanthey -man
b. *haksayng -hanthey -man -hanthey
c. *haksayng -man -hanthey

This positional variation only occurs when the host is a PP; otherwise, all case markers occur at the end of their host.

B. The nominative marker and the dative/ablative marker can occur in adjacent positions. More specifically, the nominative marker can attach to a host which ends with the dative/ablative marker.[7] This cooccurrence is not possible among other case markers. (mayli 'Mary'; hanthey dat.; -ka nom.; -lul acc.; coh- 'good'; -ayo ind.).

(12) a. mayli-hanthey-ka coh-ayo
'To Mary is good'
b. *mayli-ka-hanthey
c. *mayli-ka-lul
d. *mayli-lul-hanthey

C. When two nouns are conjoined by bound-word conjunctions such as -hako, -(i)lang, -kwa/-wa, -(i)kena and -(i)tunci (the first three mean 'and' and the last two mean 'or'), nominative/accusative markers can occur at the end of the second conjunct, but they can never occur after the first conjunct.[8]

(13) a. co-hako su-ka wa-ass-eyo
Joe-and Sue-NOM come-PAST-IND
'Joe and Sue came'
b. *co-ka-hako su-ka wa-ass-eyo

On the other hand, dative/ablative markers can appear on both conjuncts, although the one on the first conjunct is optional and the one on the second conjunct is obligatory.

(14) a. co-hanthey-hako su-hanthey yenlakhey-ss-eyo
Joe-DAT-and Sue-DAT notify-PAST-IND
b. co-hako su-hanthey yenlakhey-ss-eyo
'(I/We) notified Joe and Sue'

D. Korean has a plural marker -tul, an inflectional suffix indicating the plurality of the subject of the clause (I will call it the subject plural marker (the SPM)). Since a detailed discussion of the SPM will be given in the next section, only a difference between the two groups of case markers which involves the SPM will be demonstrated here. What is important is that the position of the SPM varies depending on the case marker it occurs with. It must occur before the case marker if the case marker is nominative or accusative, but if the case marker is dative or ablative, the SPM must occur after it. (15) through (16) illustrate these facts with an NP host.

(15) a. khi-tul-i/-ul
height-SPM-NOM/ACC
b. *khi-i/-ul-tul

(16) a. hakseyng-hanthey-tul
student-DAT-SPM
b. *haksayng-tul-hanthey[9]

When we consider possible analyses of case markers in light of these differences, we are forced to give up at least the analysis treating all case markers as inflectional suffixes. It would be very unlikely that a language distinguishes case-marking suffixes with the conflicting characteristics discussed in A, C, and D. Besides, B provides strong evidence against such an analysis, since it would be very strange for a noun to have two inflectional case markers at the same time. Thus there are three possible analyses left, as given in (17).

(17) a. an analysis which treats all case markers as postpositions;
b. an analysis which treats the nominative markers as postpositions and the dative/allative markers as suffixes;
c. an analysis which treats the nominative markers as suffixes and the dative/allative markers as postpositions.

Each of these three analyses can deal with the differences discussed above in A, B, C, and D. No problems arise for analyses (17b) or (17c), since these treat nominative/accusative markers and dative/ablative markers as different. In the case of the analysis in (17a), the difference in B can be explained in terms of the cooccurrence restrictions among postpositions, since not all postpositions can cooccur with every other postposition[10]; the difference in C can be attributed to the idiosyncracies of postpositions, since not all postpositions can appear on the first conjunct[11]; and the difference in A can to accounted for as being due to ordering restrictions among postpositions.

Now the question is how to choose the best analysis, and it is in the next section that we attempt to provide an answer to this question.

3. The status of the case markers

In this section, I will first prove that the subject plural marker (the SPM) -tul is an inflectional suffix and then examine case markers in terms of their interaction with the SPM. The idea behind this examination is based on the criterion in (9) -- that is, the syntax cannot refer to the morphological structure of words in its rules or operations.

3.1 The subject plural marker

Korean has two kinds of plural markers: the genuine plural marker (the GPM) and the subject plural marker (the SPM). Both are bound morphemes having the same phonological shape, -tul. In addition, both are optional elements in sentences, as they are freely dropped

when contextually understood. The GPM is a typical plural marker attaching to only a noun and indicating the plurality of that noun. The SPM differs from the GPM in two respects. It can attach to a variety of categories and it indicates only the plurality of the subject of a clause no matter what category it attaches to within the clause. The various syntactic categories which can be host to the SPM are illustrated in (18). That the SPM can indicate the plurality of the subject NP even when it attaches to a non-subject NP is evidenced when (18a) through (18b), in which the subject is plural, are compared to (19a) through (19d), in which the subject is singular.[12] Note that the plurality of the subject is the only difference between the corresponding sentences.

(18) a. ku salam-tul mul-tul mek-ko iss-eyo
the person-GPM water-SPM drink PROG
'they are drinking water' (OBJ NP)

b. nuney-tul ku salam-hanthey-tul ka po-a
you-GPM the person-DAT-SPM go
'you go and see the person, please' (IND OBJ NP)

c. ku ay-tul-i ku haksayng-chelem-tul-man ha-myen
the kid-GPM-NOM the student-like-SPM-only do-if
'if only the kids do as the student does' (PP)

d. ku ay-tul-i meli-kam-ki-tul-ul coaha-ciyo
the kid-GPM-NOM hair-washing-SPM-ACC like
'that kids like to wash hair' (INF COMP)

(19) a. *ku salam mul-tul mek-ko iss-eyo
'he/she is drinking water'

b. *ne ku salam-hanthey-tul ka po-a (ne 'you' (sg.))
'you go to him, please'

c. *ku ay-ka ku haksayng-chelem-tul-man hamyen
'if only the kid does as the student does'

d. *ku ay-ka meli kamki-tul-ul coaha-ciyo
'that kid likes to wash hair'

All the SPMs in (18) denote that the subject is plural in number, regardless of what they attach to.

The SPM may seem to be a bound word according to the criteria in (8d) and (8e), since it can attach to various categories including postpositions. However, as pointed out before, these criteria alone are not sufficient unless other criteria support them. In fact, when we continue our examination, other criteria seem to indicate that the SPM is an inflectional suffix. First, arbitrary gaps are found in its distribution when its host is a verb or postposition. (20) provides examples.

(20) a. Postposition
i. sakwa-chelem-tul yeppu-neyyo
apple-like-SPM pretty-IND
'(they) are pretty like apples.
ii. sakwa-kkaci-tul mek-ess-eyo
apple-even-SPM eat-PAST-IND
'(They) ate even apples'
iii.*sakwa-ppuwn-tul (ppuwn 'only')
iv. *sakwa-khenyeng-tul (cocha 'even')

b. Verb (ka- 'go'; mek- 'eat')
i. ka-sey-tul (-sey sug.) 'Let's go'
ii.*ka-mnita-tul (-(u)mnita ind.) '(We/They) are going'
iii. mek-o iss-eyo-tul (eyo ind.) 'Please enjoy eating'
iv. *mek-ess-umnita-tul '(We/They) will eat'

More crucial evidence for treating the SPM as an inflectional suffix is found when we consider the gaps in its occurrence with verbs. In (20b) -sey, -eyo and -(u)mnita are all inflectional suffixes. Now the point is that if we treat the SPM as a bound word which is

syntactically independent of the verb, we would have to allow the syntax to refer to the internal structure of the verb adjacent to the SPM in order to describe the distribution of the SPM. For example, in (20b), the syntax ought to know which inflectional suffix the verb stem ka- or mek- has in order to block the SPM from occurring after -(u)mnita. As mentioned before, this is not a desirable step. Again, if the SPM is treated as an inflectional suffix, this problem becomes just a matter of the cooccurrence restrictions between inflectional suffixes or features of a verb. Our conclusison then is that the SPM should be considered an inflectional suffix.

3.2 Case markers and the SPM

In section 2.2 we reviewed several differences between nominative/accusative markers and dative/ablative markers, but could not decide among the three possible analyses in (17). In this section it will be shown that the interaction between case markers and the SPM after a postposition enables us to choose the best analysis.

The crucial fact is the following: the SPM may precede a nominative/accusative case marker when the host is an NP, as in (18d). More examples are given in (21).

(21) a. ku cip ay-tul-i khi-tul-i khe-yo
the family kid-GPM-NOM height-SPM-NOM tall-IND
'the kids of the family are tall'
b. salam-tul-i mul-tul-ul masi-ko iss-eyo
person-GPM-NOM water-SPM-ACC are drinking-IND
'people are drinking water'

When the host is a postposition, however, this is not possible, as shown in (22) and (23).[13] (-man and -puwthe are postpositions.)

(22) a. sensayngnim-tul-i ku ay-man-ul coahay-yo
teacher-GPM-NOM the kid-only-ACC like-IND
b. sensayngnim-tul-i ku ay-man-tul coahay-yo
SPM
c. *sensayngnim-tul-i ku ay-man-tul-ul coha hay-yo
SPM-ACC
'teachers like only the kid'

(23) a. ku salam-tul-un kamuwn-puwthe-ka tall-ayo
the person-GPM-TOP family-from-NOM different-IND
b. ku salam-tul-un kamuwn-puwthe-tul tall-ayo
SPM
c. *ku salam-tul-un kamuwn-puthe-tul-i tall-ayo
SPM-NOM
'they have good family background first of all'

(22) and (23) show that postpositions can carry either the nominative/accusative marker or the SPM but not both. The question is then how to describe this coocurrence restriction, and it is here that the the criterion in (9) plays a crucial role. Given that the SPM is an inflectional suffix, if case markers are postpositions, the syntax must be allowed to refer to the internal structure of a postposition in order to determine the distribution of case markers. That is, the syntax must know whether a postposition contains the SPM, an inflectional suffix, in order to decide on whether the nominative/accusative marker may occur with it. This move has already been determined to be undesirable. On the other hand, if nominative/accusative markers are treated as suffixes, the coocurrence restriction can be dealt with simply in terms of the suppression of one inflectional suffix over another (this suppression will be discussed again in section 4), and no unnecessary power needs to be allowed for the syntax. Therefore, the proper analysis is the one treating nominative/accusative markers as suffixes and dative/ablative case markers as postpositions.

4. Plural markers and case markers in the grammar

The status of case markers having been determined in the last section, it is necessary to spell out how the descriptions of various characteristics of case markers can be implemented in the formal grammar. In this section, I will try to achieve this by employing Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (GPSG) as proposed in Gazdar et al. (1985) and the process-based morphological approach proposed in Zwicky (1985, 1987, 1988).

The fact that nominative/accusative case markers attach to various syntactic categories can be described by instantiating the feature [CASE] whose values are [Nominative] and [Accusative] on the host categories, i.e., NP, PP, QP including CP, and S via ID rules. When we consider that GPSG considers VP to be the head of a sentence and also that Korean is a head-final language, it may seem that treating the feature [CASE] as a head feature can describe the fact that case markers occur at the end of their host, namely on the head of the host. The feature instantiated on the mother node will be inherited by its head daughter according the Head Feature Convention. However, this analysis encounters problem regarding coordinate structures. As mentioned in section 2, nominative/accusative case markers appear only on the second conjunct when two conjuncts are conjoined by a bound-word conjunction. Now if the feature [CASE] is a head feature in Korean, it should be inherited on both conjuncts because they are both heads, but then the output is ungrammatical.

In order to block the [CASE] feature from being inherited on the first conjunct, I suggest the following: (a) the feature [LAST] is available in the syntax; (b) Korean has a feature coocurrence restriction [+CASE] ⊃ [+LAST] and a feature specification default [-LAST]; and (c) that Korean has a linear precedence rule X < [+LAST]. The feature [LAST] has already been motivated by Zwicky (1987) and so [LAST] does not need to be stipulated only for Korean case markers. By the feature coocurrence restriction and the feature specification default in (b) the appearance of the nominative/accusative case markers on the first conjunct is blocked. The linear precedence rule in (c) assures that the nominative/accusative case markers appear at the end of the second conjunct.

As for the optional occurrence of nominative/accusative markers, two treatments seem to be possible. One is to treat the instantiation of the [CASE] feature in the syntax as optional and the other is to allow the case marker's realization rules to apply optionally. According to the former approach, the realization rules in the morphology are obligatory, while according to the latter, the instantiation of the [CASE] feature in the syntax should be obligatory. Of these two treatments, I argue for the latter since in this analysis the [CASE] feature can be utilized in the syntax to define grammatical relations, even though it may be unrealized. If the instantiation of the [CASE] feature is optional in the syntax, as in the first analysis, then grammatical relations become hard to define.

In passing, it is worth mentioning that instantiating the [CASE] feature on host syntactic categories other than NP is not as strange as it may seem because all syntactic categories which host the case marker can appear as the subject, the object or the indirect object in sentences.

Once the features are distributed in the syntax, their phonological shapes are realized in the morphology. It is here that we need to describe the conflict between the nominative/accusative marker and the SPM after a PP. Recall that this conflict occurred only after PPs, not NPs. What seems relevant here is the number of the slot for inflectional affixes and the suppression of one feature over another in their realization. The need to employ slots to describe inflectional morphology has been discussed in Zwicky (1985), and so I will not repeat those arguments here. What I would argue for is that in Korean, nouns have at least two slots for inflectional suffixes, one for the SPM and the other for the nominative/accusative marker, while postpositions have only one slot. Because there is only one slot, when both the SPM and the nominative/accusative marker need to be realized, one

of them gets suppressed. The suppressor and the suppressee would be determined by the speaker and the context.

The distribution of the dative/ablative markers should be described in the syntax, since they are postpositions. The requirement that they precede other postpositions, as shown in section 2, can be dealt with by ordering restrictions among postpositions. Being postpositions, they also have one slot for an inflectional suffix at the end, and the nominative case marker occurs in this position.

Finally, the optional appearance of dative/ablative case markers on the first conjunct when the conjunction is a bound word does not need any special treatment. This optionality can be explained as in (24). (-hako is a conjunction meaning 'and'.)

(24) a. [NP -hanthey]$_{PP}$ -hako [NP -hanthey]$_{PP}$]$_{PP}$
b. [[NP -hako NP]$_{NP}$ -hanthey]$_{PP}$

The difference between (24a) and (24b) is the syntactic category of the two conjuncts. Since either PPs or NPs can become conjoined and since Ps take NPs as their complements, both structures are possible. As a result, the dative/ablative marker on the first conjunct is optional.

5. Conclusion

In this study, I examined case markers in Korean to determine their status within a highly modularized grammar. The main point was that the syntax is blind to the internal morphological structure of constituents in its operations and rules. It has been found that nominative/accusative case markers and the SPM -tul, an inflectional suffix, are suppressed after PPs. If nominative/accusative markers are bound words or postpositions, this suppression can only be described by allowing the syntax to refer to the internal structure of the postposition, which is not allowed in a modularized grammar. On the other hand, if nominative/accusative markers are inflectional suffixes, this suppression can easily be described in the morphology as a conflict between the two suffixes. For this reason, I argued that nominative/accusative markers are inflectional suffixes. As for dative/ablative markers, I claimed that they are postpositions partly because they differ from nominative/accusative markers in various respects that do not allow them to be categorized with nominative/accusative markers. In addition, their characteristics can easily be described by treating them as postpositions.

Notes

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1. Korean has a genitive marker -uy. I will not be concerned with it in this study because it needs its own discussion.

2. I will use the following abbreviations, especially in the examples.

NOM: nominative	SUG: suggestive
ACC: accusative	PP: postpositional phrase
DAT: dative	NP: noun phrase
IND: indicative	OBJ: object
INT: interrogative	IND OBJ: indirect object

3. Quantifiers in Korean can be separated from the NP they modify by another NP and carry the same case marker as that of their modified NP.

4. Dative/ablative markers do not occur after a P, as will be mentioned in the next section.

5. Dative/ablative markers do not occur after a nominalized sentence.

6. There are some differences in the degree of freedom, however. Dative/ablative markers can be dropped much less freely than nominative/accusative markers.

7. The accusative marker cannot occur with the dative/accusative marker, however.

8. When conjunctions are free words, nominative/accusative case markers may attach to the first conjunct in a very formal speech (e.g. the president's speech on T.V.). But this is very rare.

9. -tul can be interpreted as the genuine plural marker, not the subject plural marker (See 3.1). Thus this sentence is well-formed when we consider -tul to be the GPM.

10. There are coocurrence restrictions among postpositions illustrated in the following (ku 'the'; salam 'person'; -cocha 'even'; -man 'only'; -chelem 'like' (-cocha, -man, and -chelem are postpositions)).

(i) a. [ku salam]-chelem]-man
'only like the person'
(ii) a. *[[ku salam]-cocha]-man
b. *[[ku salam]-man]-cocha
'even the only person'

11. For example, postpositions such as -khenyeng 'even', -cocha 'even' -ppun 'only', etc. cannot appear on the first conjunct.

(i) a. sakwa-hako pay
apple-CONJ pear
'apples and pears'
b. [sakwa-hako pay]-khenyeng/-cocha/-ppun
'even/only apples and peas'
c. *[sakwa-khenyeng/-cocha/-ppun]-hako [pay-kyenyeng/ -cocha/ppun
'even apples and pears'

12. -tul becomes ambiguous between the GPM reading and the SPM reading when the object noun or indirect object noun is countable. The reason is that a suppression occurs between the two plural markers because they should occur in the same slot after a noun (See Zwicky 1985). The suppressor and suppressee are determined by the context and the speaker.

13. Other host categories such as nominalized sentences and quantifier phrases do not allow the SPM and so cannot be tested.

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